

## **STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

### **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS – AGENCY NO. 74**

**ORIGINATION DATE: OCTOBER 2011/REVISION DATE: SEPTEMBER 2014**

Goal 1: To provide premium advocacy for veterans and increase the percentage of service members in Kentucky receiving VA compensation and benefits earned.

Objective: Improve the percentage of fully developed claims (FDC) to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA) and implement D2D project. D2D is a USDVA project, which will streamline and expedite the claims process, electronically. Currently, KDVA captures claims information electronically at the state level with EVetAssist, yet files veterans' claims at the federal level manually (paper file). D2D, with the assistance of a federal electronic information gateway, will allow filing claims digitally to become a seamless process with the USDVA.

- a. Eighty-five percent (85%) of claims are fully developed when filed by KDVA with USDVA. FDCs expedite USDVA adjudicated claims, which decreases the current backlog.
- b. Total claims filed in FY 2014 by KDVA -13,291. This was a small increase from FY 2013.

Goal 2: To provide first class long term care services to veteran residents of KDVA nursing home facilities in a manner that is judicious of state supported funds.

Objective: Increase mental health services for veteran residents receiving long term care at KDVA homes. Medicaid program has been implemented at the homes as of July 1, 2014, progress from the previous strategic progress plan report. Electronic health records have also become a reality in KDVA veteran homes, which should improve the delivery of care due to the integration and legibility of a resident's medical records. Anticipation date opening fourth nursing home in Radcliffe will be September 2015.

Goal 3: To provide a final resting place and dignified burial services for veterans and their spouses/dependents.

Objective: KDVA provides quality services by maintaining the utmost of care of the veterans' cemeteries and working with families during a time of duress to facilitate the loss of a loved one.

- a. In FY 2014, there were 1,204 veteran/dependent burials. This is an increase from 2012 in which there were 1045 veteran/dependent burials.
- b. In FY 2014, burial honors stipend assistance increased from \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually. This was additional funding provided by the Kentucky legislature.
- c. VA per diem for veteran burial is \$734, a significant increase from \$700 in FY 2013.

Goal 4: To focus on veterans who are “at risk” of becoming homeless in order to reduce veteran homelessness in the state.

Objective: Kentucky Homeless Veteran Program continues to assist “at risk” veterans with a one time, small donation (rental and mortgage payment, telephone bill, heating bill). The program also supports the substance abuse and alcohol program at the VA Lexington clinic operated by the non-profit, Volunteers of America. Several classes graduate each year.

- a. In 2014, the program addressed the needs of 394 veterans homeless or “at risk” homeless veterans. This was a slight increase in numbers from the 2012 progress report.
- b. Amount of funding spent was \$92,298.34, an increase from 2012 progress report.

Goal 5: To assist unemployed veterans with employment opportunities through job fairs and job retraining programs and by furthered support of veteran preference legislation.

Objective: Hiring Our Heroes web site housed under Kentucky.gov has provided information about employment opportunities statewide to numerous veterans and employers. Number is unquantifiable to date. KDVA continues to participate and co-sponsor job fairs with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

- a. According to a reputable state economist, the FY 2014 veteran unemployment rate in KY was an estimated 7.2%. That figure is an increase from 5.8% reported by the U.S. Department of Labor on KY veterans in FY 2013.
- b. Approximately thirty-six (36) veterans have graduated from the University of Louisville veteran entrepreneurship program since inception.
- c. Approximately 2000 Kentucky veterans participated in the Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) sponsored by the USDVA. This program retrains veterans 35 years and older for high demand occupations.

Goal 6: To focus on a strong partnership with the USDVA and participate in outreach activities that benefit and promote Kentucky veterans.

Objective: Build and foster a relationship with VISN-9, VA Lexington and Louisville hospitals mental health team. This partnership is designed to improve mental health services overall for veterans in Kentucky. For example, expanding USDVA telemental health access in rural areas by using state facilities. KDVA also works closely with the VARO Louisville office, which helps to expedite certain claims. Finally, VA has agreed to collaborate with the state veteran nursing homes to improve mental health services for veteran residents.

- a. Four teleconference calls quarterly with the partners mentioned directly above.
- b. Attend VA sponsored events as a guest speaker.

Goal 7: To communicate in a timely and effective manner with the public about KDVA services.

Objective: KDVA representatives attend numerous events, highlights services on its' website and facebook page. The agency also plans to expand other social media avenues, promoting KDVA services and activities. Timely press releases highlight services and events.